

One of the things that we have to do is to try to help them gain some measure of control over their own country again. And if you look at Colombia, in the sort of the intersection of the narcotraffickers and the political rebels, you see a picture of what you might see much more of in the 21st century world, with sort of the enemies of nation-states forming networks of support across national borders and across otherwise discrete interests, like narcotraffickers, organized criminals, and political terrorists, weapons dealers.

So this will be an interesting test run for what I predict to you not only our Nation but others in our position will have to face over the next two decades. And it is something, again, I'm going to work very hard to build a bipartisan consensus on this and take this out of politics, because I believe that this is not only something we should do for our friend and neighbor in the country that is either the production or transit point for about 80 percent of the cocaine that gets dumped in this country; but also, if you will, a test run for the kind of challenges that my successors and our people will face in the years ahead.

Thank you.

Iowa Caucuses

Q. Did you miss being in Iowa? I'll bet you did.

The President. A little bit. I did. I love it there. They've been good to me. But I was interested in it. It's interesting to me to watch it unfold and watch how the decisions they make—which is why I don't want you guys to get me into it. This should be their campaigns, and they should make the decisions. And we should trust the people. They'll get it right. They always do.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Senator Bill Bradley; Elian Gonzalez, rescued off the coast of Florida on November 25, 1999; Juan Gonzalez, Marięla Gonzalez, and Raquel Rodriguez, Elian's father and grandmothers; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas. Indian Airlines Flight 814, from Kathmandu to New Delhi, was hijacked on December 24, 1999.

Interview With Jim Lehrer of PBS' "NewsHour"

January 26, 2000

State of the Union

Mr. Lehrer. Mr. President, welcome.

The President. Thank you.

Mr. Lehrer. Can we assume, sir, that tomorrow night in the State of the Union you're going to declare the state of the Union to be in pretty good shape?

The President. It's in good shape. And I'm very grateful. But I'm also going to challenge the Congress and the country to make it better.

Mr. Lehrer. The things that are good about this country right now, how much of that do you believe you deserve credit for?

The President. Well, I think most of the credit, as always, goes to the American people. This is a country where citizenship is the most important job anybody can have. And I think we should start with that. I think the Members of Congress who are working with us deserve a lot of credit. But if you look at where we are now, compared to where we were 7 years ago, I think the fact that we got rid of the deficit and are running surpluses; the fact that we changed the philosophy of the National Government on welfare, on crime; the fact that we have formed unprecedented partnerships with people in the private sector to deal with all kinds of social problems—teen pregnancy, which is down, adoptions, which are up—the fact that we have protected more land than any administration in the country's history, except those of the two Roosevelts—I think that those things are things that our Government did.

I also believe that people have a lot more confidence now, that we can actually do things as a nation. In '92 we didn't just have economic distress and social decline. We had this political gridlock and discredited Government. The national Republicans have badmouthed the Government for 12 years, and they'd done a pretty good job of convincing America that it couldn't do anything. Now we have cut the size of Government by over 350,000. It's the smallest it's been since John Kennedy was here, and it really

works to empower people and to create these partnerships.

So I think that we have played a role in the recovery of the economy and in the improvement of the situation with crime, with welfare, with education. We've opened the doors of college to virtually all Americans. And I think all these things count for something. And of course, our country has been a great force for peace and freedom around the world. And I'm very grateful for the chance to—all of us—to serve here.

President's Historical Legacy

Mr. Lehrer. Do you believe that history is going to give you credit for all those things you've just enumerated?

The President. Well, I think that's up to the historians. I think that history will be very much—that people who do serious histories of this administration will be amazed at the amount of energy and effort that went into the wide variety of areas that we worked in. And I think that it will show that in virtually every area we had progress, from helping to reduce poverty to improving the plight of our children, to creating an environment with the reform of telecommunications, the reform of banking, and getting rid of the deficit and major investments in science and technology, to this exploding new economy.

I think that it will show that we helped America to make this major transition into a new economy and an era of globalization.

Mr. Lehrer. Are you worried about what the historians are going to write about you?

The President. No, I can't control that. But I think time will tend to accelerate the positive and put what negative there is into proper perspective. And I feel quite comfortable about that. But the main thing is, I don't think too much about it because I know that the only thing I can do to impact on it is to do the right thing today by the American people.

I mean, my philosophy has been, ever since I got here, is that in the modern political world, the most important thing you can do is get up and go to work and concentrate on your job and always keep thinking about tomorrow. And all the pressures that operate on you are designed to prevent you from doing that, to hobble you, to distract you,

to divide you, to get you to obsess about what somebody said or wrote or is doing.

And so my whole theory has been from the beginning that if we could start and give, first 4 years and then 8 years, of unbridled, concentrated effort, no matter what else happened, the American people would be all right. And that's really all I hired on to do, is to try to help them do better.

Mr. Lehrer. Let me read what the New York Times said in its lead editorial on Monday. They're talking about you, your legacy, and your Presidency as you go into this last year. It said, "historians are beginning to categorize Mr. Clinton as a politician of splendid natural talent and some significant accomplishments who, nonetheless, missed the greatness that once seemed within his grasp." What's your reaction to that "what might have been" kind of thing?

The President. I think that—well, first of all, I think it's not productive to talk about what might have been. But I think if you—the question is how you keep score, what is this time like, how will you measure it? The time that this is most like is the turn of the last century. Did we manage the transition of America in the new economy and an era of globalization well, or not? I think the answer is, we did. Did we make social progress? Did we actually change the way we approach social issues? If the issue is crime, welfare, national service, the answer is, we did. Were we good stewards of the environment? We were.

And then, what were the forces you stood against, and what did you stop? And if you look at the forces we stood against from 1994 forward and what we stopped, I think the answer is, what we did was, A, successful, and B, good for America. And then, did we work with contending forces when we could to reach common agreement? I think the answer is, we did. So I believe that, first of all, there is no such thing as history, because this is still going on. We shouldn't worry about that. You know, in 5 years, 10 years, 20 years—I got a book the other day on President Nixon's Presidency, and then I got one a week afterward on President Kennedy's Presidency that are still being written.

I just read a new book, a great book, on Theodore Roosevelt's Presidency. And I think the further away you get from it, the more perspective you get and the more you're able to look at all the evidence.

So frankly, my view is not much better than the New York Times' on this. Neither one of us really can properly evaluate how this will be viewed in the light of history. I think that we have, given what we could have accomplished within the framework of possibility that was there and the job that was there before us, I think we've done pretty well. But all I can tell you is, I've worked every day, and I did the best I could, and I'm going to let the historians make their judgment after I give it one more hard year.

President's Agenda for Last Year in Office

Mr. Lehrer. Let's talk about the one more hard year. Is there one particular thing that you really want to do before you leave this office?

The President. Well, there are many things that I really want to do before I leave this office. Obviously, I'm still heavily engaged in the search for peace in the Middle East. But whether we can do that or not depends—

Mr. Lehrer. What's the problem there, Mr. President? Particularly Syria and Israel, what's the problem?

The President. I think the main problem is they haven't talked in a long time; there's still a fair measure of distrust; and the decisions that have to be made will require of both parties actions which will cause difficulty for them with some constituencies in their country.

But let me say, I'm convinced that both the leaders of Syria and Israel want peace, and I'm convinced that substantively they're not that far apart. So we have a chance to do that.

But you asked me what I wanted to do. That's something I would like to be involved in if they want to do it. I'm prepared to do whatever I can.

I want to continue to do everything I can to protect the natural treasures of this country. I want to lay the foundation for America dealing with climate change. I want to lay the foundation for America dealing with what

I think will be the biggest security challenges of the 21st century.

I believe—you know, all the attention today is on whether we can develop a missile defense and, if so, whether we can deploy it without falling out with the Russians and our friends and other countries who question this. But the likeliest threat, in my view, is brought on by the intersection of technology and the likelihood that you'll have terrorists and narcotraffickers and organized criminals cooperating with each other, with smaller and smaller and more difficult to detect weapons of mass destruction and powerful traditional weapons. So we've tried to lay in a framework for dealing with cyberterrorism, bioterrorism, chemical terrorism. This is very important. Now, this is not in the headlines, but I think it's very, very important for the next 10 or 20 years. I think the enemies of the nation-state in this interconnected world are likely to be the biggest security threat.

And then, of course, you know the things that are really close to my heart: I'm going to try to get a lot done in education, in health care, in bringing opportunity to poor people and reducing poverty in this country.

Health Care

Mr. Lehrer. What about health care? What is it that you would like your legacy to be on health care?

The President. Well, I wish I could have given health insurance to all Americans, because I still think it's inexcusable that we are the only advanced country in the world that doesn't do that. But I feel good about many of the things we have done, in medical research, in letting people keep their health insurance when they change jobs, in providing much more preventive screening for older people with illnesses or potential illnesses, and of course, in the Children's Health Insurance Program.

So I'm going to focus now on what I think I can get done this year. I want to try to increase the number of people with health insurance dramatically by letting the parents of children in the Children's Health Insurance Program buy into it, by letting people between the ages of 55 and 65 buy into Medicare. And I want to have another big investment in biomedical research.

Education

Mr. Lehrer. What about education? What mark can you leave in this next year on education?

The President. First of all, if you look at what we have done—we've already helped almost all the States to develop higher standards. And we've got—test scores in reading, math, and college entrance exams are up.

Mr. Lehrer. And you feel you've done that? You feel the administration has done that?

The President. No, I—I think our administration has contributed to it. No, the people that did it were the kids and the parents and the teachers. But I think, consistent with our philosophy, which is to be a catalyst for new ideas and to be a partner to help people achieve it, there's no question we've had an impact.

Now, one thing we've had a really direct impact on is we've done more than any administration ever has to open the doors of college to everyone with big increases in Pell grants; the direct student loan program, which lets people borrow money at less cost and pay it off at a percentage of their income; we've got a million work-study grants; we've got AmeriCorps, 150,000 young people there; and the HOPE scholarship tax credit and the lifetime tax credit really means people have no excuse for not going to school.

Now, I have also proposed this time, for the first time in history, that we make college tuition tax deductible, up to \$10,000 a year, which will mean that we have guaranteed access to 4 years of college for all Americans. I think that is a huge achievement. Since I became President, the number of—the percentage of high school graduates going to college has gone up to 67 percent. That's an increase of 10 percent. But we need for everybody to be able to go. And so I think that this will be a major achievement.

Now let's go back to the beginning. The next big challenge, besides making—this is the last piece, making college universally available. The next big challenge is to make sure that everybody's diploma means something. And we've been working on this all along, starting in early childhood, the increases we made in Head Start. We now have 1,000 colleges sending mentors into grade

schools to make sure kids learn to read by the third grade. And I think we've increased the emphasis on that—you probably noticed that Jim Barksdale gave \$100 million to the University of Mississippi, to do nothing but focus on how we can teach grade school kids to read. This is a huge deal; it's great.

So what else do we need to do? I think we need a national strategy to turn around failing schools or shut them down. I think we need to institutionalize reform with more charter schools. And I think we ought to make preschool available to everybody. And everybody that needs it ought to have access to after-school. I think if you get those things done, and we continue to train the teachers, especially in how to use the computers as you hook up all the schools to the Internet, I think you're going to see really big, continuing improvements in education.

Mr. Lehrer. But you can't do all that this next year, can you?

The President. Sure we can. We can—no, but we can take big steps toward it. If you look at the whole history of our country—I read something President Johnson said the other day, and he got through Medicare and the Medicaid and the first steps of major Federal aid to education. He talked about how most of our big progress comes in deliberate, discrete steps. And if you take enough steps in the right direction, you turn back around, you see you've come quite a long way.

So what I'm going to try to do in my speech tomorrow night is to outline what I think the long-term goals for the Nation in the 21st century should be and then what steps I think we can realistically hope to achieve in this year and urge the Congress to join me in them.

2000 Elections and President's Agenda

Mr. Lehrer. Now, you're doing this, of course, in a Presidential election year. In whose interest is it to help you do this, in terms of simple politics of getting it done, to help you improve your legacy or get things done before you leave office?

The President. Well, first of all, it's in none of their interest to help me improve my legacy. That's not why they should do it. It is in their interest to do the job they

were hired to do, which is to help the people they represent. And I think the people that they represent, whether Republicans or Democrats, would find it amazing that someone could suggest they ought to take a year off. I mean, anybody who wants to take a year off ought to give up their paycheck and say, "I'm sorry. I'm not going to work this year, but I'm not going to take your money."

Secondly, in a more mundane way, it is clearly in the interests of all the people in Congress to do things that are good for America, because the American people will appreciate it. I think it helps the Democrats, but I don't think the Republicans—I mean, a bunch of them have to run next time, too. And people are going to know—want to know, what did you do last year?

If you look, it's quite interesting. We had a very good year in '96, where I had to veto the welfare reform bill twice because the Republicans wouldn't agree with me to guarantee child care and health care and more nutrition and medical care and transportation for the welfare families. And then they did it at the end, and we got this big welfare reform. And now we've got 7 million fewer people on welfare. In '98 we passed a lot of very important legislation at the end, because it was election year.

So what you might see in terms of Congress now is not an enormous amount of activity at the beginning, although I do believe there's a good chance we can fairly early pass my proposal to help Colombia fight off narco-trafficking and preserve its democracy and work with its neighbors along the border. And I think there's a good chance they'll pass the China normal trade relations bill—I hope that's true—but I think at the end of the year, when people will be held accountable by the voters, I think there's a chance we'll get quite a lot done. We did in '96. We did in '98. I think we will this year.

Leadership Choice in 2000 Elections

Mr. Lehrer. Mr. President, what do you make of Governor Bush's comment the other night after he had won the caucuses in Iowa? He said, this is the beginning of the end of the Clinton era, and everybody in the room cheered.

The President. Well, they would. [*Laughter*] I think if he said that he would reverse what we were doing, I think he would. And I think that's the choice before the American people. I mean, he's offered a \$1.4 billion tax cut. And the only thing I'd ask the American people is to remember, you know, we've now had 20 years of experience. We tried it their way for 12 years, and they quadrupled the national debt. And when I took office, we had high unemployment, a massive deficit, a huge debt, and totally neglected our domestic affairs. We had rising crime, rising welfare rolls, all the social indicators going the wrong way.

Now, we've tried it our way for 7 years. We've got the biggest surpluses in history, the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years. We can get this country out of debt now in 13 years—out of debt for the first time since Andy Jackson was President in 1835. And all the social indicators are going in the right direction.

So it seems to me that he was being honest with the people, that he said that he will reverse this course. And I do think the American people ought to vote for change in this election, because things are changing so fast around us in this globalized world, we have to keep changing. The issue is: Are we going to build on what works or revert to what didn't. That's what I think the issue is.

Mr. Lehrer. You've given kind of your definition of the Clinton era, and he has his. Now, what he is—the interpretation of what he's talking about is that it's just a continuation of what all the Presidential candidates have mentioned to some degree, that Republicans like Governor Bush, more than the Democrats, but even Vice President Gore and Senator Bradley have said about returning the Presidency back to a nobler office, to words like promising to restore dignity and respectability, decency, and trust to the Presidency. They're talking about you, aren't they, Mr. President?

The President. Well, first of all, I made one mistake. I apologized for it. I paid a high price for it, and I've done my best to atone for it by being a good President. But I believe we also endured what history will clearly record was a bogus investigation, where there was nothing to Whitewater and nothing to

these other charges, and they were propagated, and tens of millions of dollars were spent, and we got a clean bill of health on that.

And in terms of trust, let me just tell you a story. I went back to New Hampshire for the seventh anniversary of the New Hampshire primary in 1991—or the eighth anniversary, excuse me, last year, in 1992—so it was the seventh anniversary. I went back there last year. And it was raining, and there were children standing in the rain, and people standing in the rain. And the thing that meant the most to me—not the Democratic Party event, just going around, because they heard the campaign in the most detail—was people saying, you know, “We’re so much better off now, but the thing that really matters is, you did exactly what you said you would do.”

And it seems to me that all of us in life, we can spend all of our time pointing our finger at other people and saying we’re better than they are, or we can work as hard as we can on our own character, on our own lives. And if we’re in public life, we need to tell people what we’re going to do and then we need to do it. And if we don’t do it, it ought to be because we tried and couldn’t.

I think that’s what people know about me and this administration. We laid out the most detailed set of commitments anybody ever had in ’92. We’ve accomplished virtually everything we set out to do. What we haven’t accomplished, we tried and failed to accomplish. And even there, in the health care area, we made a lot of progress. And people know that.

So I’m satisfied that the American people will make a judgment in this election based on what’s best for them and their families, on whatever factors they choose. They’re in control again. We’re back into the biggest job interview in the whole world. And whatever they decide and however they decide it, I think they’ll get it right. They nearly always do.

Mr. Lehrer. Do you get angry, though, when somebody like Alan Keyes said recently, “We are coming to the end of the most disgraceful, the most immoral Presidency in the history of this country”?

The President. No, because he’s a far rightwinger who probably thought Iran-Contra was a good thing for America. And you know, there’s just no evidence to support it. I mean, you know—so it doesn’t make me mad at all. How could you take that seriously? This is about—one of the things that I had to learn when I moved to Washington is, before I ever got angry at anything anybody said, was to ask myself whether it was about the subject they were discussing, or whether it was really about power.

And I remember once, I had a conversation with a Republican Senator in the middle of the D’Amato hearings, when he was trying to convince people, or at least the Republican Senators were, that my wife had done something wrong in this Whitewater thing, which was totally absurd. And so I asked this Senator, I said, “Do you think either one of us did anything wrong? Not illegal, just wrong, even wrong?” And he started laughing. He said, “You’ve got to be kidding.” He said, “Of course you didn’t do anything wrong. That’s not the purpose of this. The purpose of this is to convince the American people you did. It’s all about power.”

Now, I made a mistake. I acknowledged it. I’ve done my best to atone for it. But all this broad-brush stuff, you know, people see that for what it is. And when I’m criticized now, I try to remember Benjamin Franklin’s admonition that our critics are our friends, for they show us our faults. So, you know, I’m just trying to be a better person and a better President every day. I don’t know what else to do. And I’m trying not to let this stuff get in the way.

Again let me say, the job of a President is to have a vision and a strategy and pursue it; to show up every day and, insofar as possible, to think about the American people and their welfare, and to not think about himself. The environment in which a President operates is designed to prevent him from doing that—as much as possible, to make him torn up and upset, full of recriminations and anger, and have his attention divided.

So what I’ve tried to do is to create a frame of mind and a climate around here with our people, so we could do our job. I hope I’ve

succeeded. I think the results think for themselves.

Impeachment

Mr. Lehrer. Difficult question, a matter of history that I feel compelled to ask you, Mr. President. We sat, you and I, 2 years ago almost to the day, and it was the day that the Monica Lewinsky story broke in the Washington Post and the Los Angeles Times. And you denied that you had had an improper sexual relationship with Ms. Lewinsky. In retrospect, if you had answered that differently right at the beginning, not only just my question but all those questions at the beginning, do you think there would have been a different result and that, in fact, you might not even have been impeached?

The President. I don't know. I don't know. I just don't know. I wish I knew the answer to that, but I don't. But the thing I regret most, except for doing the wrong thing, is misleading the American people about it. I do not regret the fact that I fought the independent counsel. And what they did was, in that case and generally, was completely overboard. And now rational retrospectives are beginning to come out where people that have no connection to me talking about what an abuse of power it was and what a threat to the American system it was. And I'm glad that our people stuck with me, and that the American people stuck with me, and I was able to resist what it was they attempted to do.

But I do regret the fact that I wasn't straight with the American people about it. It was something I was ashamed of and pained about, and I regret that.

Independent Counsel's Investigation

Mr. Lehrer. There was another interview that we did before that, in which I asked you if you agreed with Susan McDougal that Kenneth Starr was out to get you. And your answer was interpreted by Mr. Starr and others that, "well, the facts speak for themselves," is what you said. There have been many facts since then. That interview was even before 2 years ago. Do you think the facts have spoken on that?

The President. Oh, absolutely. I mean, it's not even close anymore. Everybody knows

what the deal was. And more and more, there will be people who didn't have a vested interest in trying to promote some view they had previously taken who will evaluate this and come to the same conclusion.

And as I said, even though I'm sorry about what I did and sorry about the developments there, I really felt, once the last chapter of this played out, that I was defending the Constitution and the Presidency. And I feel that more strongly today.

I think they knew for a long time there was nothing to Whitewater. They knew it was a bunch of bull. They had no evidence. In fact, if even the law we had, or the one we had before the independent counsel law had been in place, there never would have been a special counsel because it didn't meet the standard. The only reason I agreed to ask Janet Reno to appoint one in the first place was I really believed that the people that were talking about it wanted to know the truth, and I knew that they'd just look into Whitewater and find out it was a big bunch of bull and go on. And what I found out was that a lot of the people who wanted it didn't want to know the truth. And they wanted somebody that could hang on until they could find something that they could find about me or Hillary.

But they knew for a long time. They knew before 1996 that there was nothing to it, which was why they had to get rid of Mr. Fiske and get Mr. Starr in there, so it would drag past the '96 election. And I think history will show that, too. So I'm relaxed about that, and I don't spend much time thinking about it.

Again, to me, I had to make amends to the American people, and to my family and to my friends and my administration. I've done my best to do that. Now, the only way I can do that is to just keep looking toward the future, to stay excited, to stay upbeat, and to stay focused. And that's what I'm trying to do.

Mr. Lehrer. Do you have moments, private moments, of pleasure and satisfaction knowing that if, in fact, there was a conspiracy to run you out of office, it didn't work, you're still sitting in the Oval Office?

The President. I don't spend much time thinking about it like that. You know, maybe

when I'm gone I will. I'm grateful that for whatever reason, my friends and my family stayed with me; the American people stayed with me. I believe I defended the Constitution against a serious threat. I'm sorry I did something wrong, which gave them an excuse to really go overboard. I'm very sorry about that. But mostly what I try to do is to focus on trying to be a better President, trying to be a better person, trying to be a better husband and father, just trying to do the things that I can do.

You know, you can't—none of us ever gets ahead in life, I don't think, by taking big satisfaction in victories or looking down on other people or keeping our anger pent up. One of the things I learned in this whole deal is you've got to let all that go. Life will always humble you if you give in to your anger or take some satisfaction that you defeated somebody or some satisfaction that, well, no matter how bad I am, at least I didn't do this, that, or the other thing. Life will always humble you. And I have just tried to be grateful and to keep serving and to just worry about myself and not think about other people—in terms of whether you're doing right or wrong. That's all I can do.

But I'm actually—what I feel every day is, I'm just happy. My family was all here at Christmas. We had this fabulous Christmas. My administration, I've been fortunate by having all these people stay with me. The ones that leave are going off to do exciting things. And we've got—I feel that when I took office, the country had so many problems in it—it's like we've turned it around now, and we're going in the right direction. And now we've got a chance to really dream big dreams for our children. And that's a great thing to be doing in your last year in office. It's great. And not only to dream those dreams but actually take some big steps toward achieving them. So I'm just happy. You know, I can't be mad or—it's hard for me to think about all that stuff. It just happened. I've come to terms with it, and I'm just trying to go on.

Post-Presidential Plans

Mr. Lehrer. When this next year is over, you'll leave office, and you'll be the youngest former President since Teddy Roosevelt.

You'll be in your fifties. You'll still have a lot of time and energy. Are you worried about that at all, about staying connected?

The President. No, not at all. No, no, I'm so excited about it. I mean, I'm worried I'll have to go back to learning basic things. But I'm excited about that, too, driving a car, shopping for food, paying the bills when the house—the pipes freeze, all that kind of stuff. You've got to go back to living your life like an ordinary person. I think that's good.

But Theodore Roosevelt had an interesting life when he left office. And of course, I've said this many times; I think President Carter has basically set the standard for what Presidents should do in terms of his public service at home and around the world. And that shows you that there's just worlds of possibilities out there. I'm very excited about it.

There are all kinds of things that I'll have to do. Of course, I'll have to make a living, and I hope I'll have to make a living to support a wife who's continuing our family's tradition of public service. But—

Hillary Clinton's Senate Campaign

Mr. Lehrer. Do you think she's going to win?

The President. I do, yes. I do.

Mr. Lehrer. Why? Why do you think so?

The President. Well, I think they're both very strong, formidable people and strong, formidable candidates. You know, you get all these elections, where you've got to bad-mouth one candidate to like another, and you'd think I'd certainly be there in the race involving my wife. But the truth is, the mayor and Hillary are both strong, formidable people. They have impressive achievements in their lives that relate to public service.

But I think that she's much better suited for the work of a Senator and this whole legislative process. And I think that the passions of her life, 30 years of work and achievement in education and health care and the challenges that children and families face, and the whole philosophy she has about community are more consistent with where New York is today and what they need in the future.

And so that's why I think she'll win, not because I think he's the bad guy or something, because I think they're both very

strong people, but I think that New York will believe, in the end, that what she represents and where she wants to go and what her skills are and what she knows and cares most about is a little closer to where they are than his whole approach. And I think she'll win.

So I'll have to worry about that. But once I figure out how to support my wife's public service—she supported mine for many years—and fulfill my other family obligations, I want to find a way, through the center I'm going to build in Arkansas, with my library and in other ways, to be a public servant. You don't have to be an elected official to be a public servant. You can be a servant in other ways. And I can help others and do things, and that's what I want to do.

Mr. Lehrer. Mr. President, thank you very much.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 3:30 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Jim Barksdale, president and chief executive officer, Netscape Communications Corp.; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; former Senator Bill Bradley, Democratic Presidential candidate; Republican Presidential candidate Alan Keyes; former Senator Alfonse M. D'Amato; Susan McDougal, Whitewater investigation defendant; former Independent Counsel Robert B. Fiske, Jr., and his successor, Kenneth Starr; and Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani of New York City. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Deployment of Military Forces for Stabilization of Areas of the Former Yugoslavia Report

January 25, 2000

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In my report to the Congress of July 19, 1999, I provided further information on the deployment of combat-equipped U.S. Armed Forces to Bosnia and Herzegovina and other states in the region in order to participate in and support the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-led Stabilization Force (SFOR), which began its mission and assumed authority from the NATO-led Implementation Force on December 20, 1996. I

am providing this supplemental report, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, to help ensure that the Congress is kept fully informed on continued U.S. contributions in support of peacekeeping efforts in the former Yugoslavia.

The U.N. Security Council authorized member states to continue SFOR for a period of 12 months in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1247 of June 18, 1999. The mission of SFOR is to provide a continued military presence in order to deter hostilities, stabilize and consolidate the peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, contribute to a secure environment, and provide, within its means and capabilities, selective support to key areas and key civil implementation organizations.

The U.S. force contribution to SFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina is in the process of being reduced from approximately 6,200 to 4,600 personnel. In the second half of 1999, all NATO nations and 19 others, including Russia and Ukraine, have provided military personnel or other support to SFOR. Most U.S. forces are assigned to Multinational Division, North, centered around the city of Tuzla. In addition, approximately 1,500 U.S. military personnel are deployed to Hungary, Croatia, and Italy in order to provide logistical and other support to SFOR. The U.S. forces continue to support SFOR in efforts to apprehend persons indicted for war crimes. In the last 6 months, U.S. forces have sustained no combat-related fatalities.

I have directed the participation of U.S. Armed Forces in these operations pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive, and in accordance with various statutory authorities.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed about developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina and other states in the region. I will continue to consult closely with the Congress regarding our efforts to foster peace and stability in the former Yugoslavia.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of